



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	9/01/2005	Interpretation #	05-012
Topic	Residential Burglar Alarms		
Code Section(s)	NFPA #72, 1999 Edition		
Requested by	John Morley, Fire Chief Big Bear Lake Fire Department PO Box 10000 Big Bear Lake, CA 92315		

1. Is it acceptable to install a residential burglar alarm system with fire detection capabilities in commercial occupancies that do not require a fire alarm system?

No. A residential burglar/fire alarm system cannot be used in commercial occupancies as it is tested to a different standard than those systems used for commercial buildings. A residential system is tested to UL 985, and a commercial system is tested to UL 864.

2. If this is acceptable, what requirements would apply to the placement and spacing of signaling devices (i.e., can partial coverage be provided?).

N/A

3. If a commercial burglar alarm system is installed in commercial occupancies with fire detection capabilities (and is not a required system), what requirements would apply to the placement and spacing of signaling devices.

The current adopted edition of NFPA 72 would apply for placement and spacing of initiating devices and appliances. However, the commercial burglar alarm panel must also be CSFM listed for fire alarm use.

4. Can partial coverage be provided?

Partial and selective coverage shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 72 1999 edition, and the CFC 2001 and in a manner acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

5. If it is determined that the above situations are not code compliant in the absence of a specific local ordinance, what State provision would authorize the removal or upgrading of a non-required fire-alarm system?

Title 19, California Code of Regulations, Section 3.24 requires that all systems already in place shall be kept operable at all times. Section 103 of the 2001 California Building Code would give the Authority Having Jurisdiction the authority to have the system removed if it cannot be maintained. Also, state law requires State Fire Marshal listing for all fire alarm devices and systems. If the system in place is not SFM listed, it must be removed.